

**MINUTES
CITY OF BLOOMINGTON
COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABILITY**

Tuesday, March 13, 2012

6:00 pm McCloskey Room, City Hall, 401 North Morton Street

Next Meeting: Tuesday, April 10, 2012

Roll Call:

Members present: Maggie Sullivan, Cynthia Schultz, George Huntington, Bill Brown, David Parkhurst, Ted Mendoza, David Rollo, Ashley Skooglund, Claire Cumberland (new member)

Regrets: Amy Countryman, Amanda Figolah, Caleb Steiner

Staff: Jacqui Bauer

Chair Maggie Sullivan called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

Announcements:

Claire Cumberland, a newly appointed member of the commission, introduced herself.

Ashley described the Community Conservation Challenge grant received by the county. The solar panels on the north end of the Showers Building are about 50% installed, and several dashboards will be installed in local schools. The ribbon cutting will be in April.

There will also be a special session on March 29 to review the state's energy audit of county facilities through the Community Energy Plan Program.

The E-House Open House will be on March 23. IU's Office of Sustainability hopes this will eventually be a zero-energy building.

IU's Energy Challenge will also kick-off on April 3.

Ted did a short piece for WFIU's Speak Your Mind program on energy conservation. It will air Thursday.

Dave R. summarized his presentation on peak oil, as well as a talk given by USGS on the "end" of peak oil. He noted several inconsistencies and questions about the data presented in the USGS talk.

Approval of Minutes:

The January and February minutes were approved.

Presentation by Vectren on rate structures and efficiency programs

Tom Bailey from Vectren gave a short presentation on Vectren's programs.

He started with an overview of Vectren's rate structure. 60-70% of bills are the commodity price that Vectren pays for gas, while the remainder is for distribution and other expenses.

He noted the volatility of the gas prices over the last decade. Gas is currently trading at \$3-5 while peaks in the last few years were around \$14 per dekatherm.

The company serves residential, commercial, industrial customers. While the Bloomington area is only served with natural gas, Vectren also provides electricity in some areas of the state. Some other points on rates:

- Customers consuming more than 5,000 dekatherms a year can purchase gas from a 3rd party.
- Vectren has no demand charges or peak charges like there are in electricity
- They have a decoupled rate structure, which removes the incentive from them to sell more gas to residential and other smaller customers. This in turn incentivizes the company to promote conservation.
- Natural gas use—90% of energy retained to end use appliances (unlike much higher levels of waste for electricity).
- The rate structure has 2 tiers for residential, 3 for commercial and industrial, with the cost per therm declining the more customers use.
- Gas is purchased from all over North America, and the increase in gas supply has allowed gas prices to remain low and stable

Vectren makes numerous appliance rebates and other incentives available through their Conservation Connection.

- Businesses have access to the same incentives as residences, with up to \$25k available in incentives per business. Examples include \$5k on boilers with 90% AFUE, \$5k on boiler controls.
- All non-transport customers are eligible for technical assistance programs
- Clear Results—3rd party admin of conservation programs; customers can also call Vectren for help with audits.

Syngas (synthetic gas produced from coal) plant proposed in northern Indiana—Vectren has openly opposed this project.

They are also working on combined heat and power and on deploying more compressed natural gas (CNG) vehicle infrastructure. Honda in Greensburg is producing CNG vehicles.

Regarding renewable energy: they have 80 MW of wind power, some amount of methane. In the past they have asked permission to charge a “green tariff” to allow customers to opt to pay more for renewables, but it was declined by the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC).

Report on sustainable agriculture conference

Dave Parkhurst reported on the sustainable agriculture conference he attended recently. BCOS funded Dave’s participation in a field trip of community gardens. The trip included Dunbar Garden (which raises bees, chickens, goats, compost, vegetables, etc.) and the Mabelvale Magnet Middle School garden, which is a project of the AR Children’s Hospital Research Institute and a part of a childhood obesity program.

During the trip he learned of a program called FoodCorps that deploys volunteers to communities to help work on local food initiatives.

We also discussed having BCOS support two farm-related bills being considered by Congress. Reviewed Dave's suggested language and voted unanimously to approve his language with the edits suggested during the meeting.

Report from the Chair

Maggie met with Earth Care to discuss strategies to meet their proposed 40% energy reduction goal and they are working on identifying ways of drawing in additional partners.

Ted recorded a "Speak your Mind" monologue for WFIU on energy conservation. Maggie asked if anyone else is interested in recording another of these on water or food for the next quarter. Claire volunteered.

Report from the Sustainability Coordinator

The City has installed two new public electric vehicle charging stations in downtown parking garages. They will be completely up-and-running very soon.

Jacqui also mentioned that she will be hiring an energy management intern for the summer to help with building assessments, and asked commissioners to please share this info with anyone they know who might be interested.

The S Walnut Streetscape project kicked off on Monday, and in addition to addressing stormwater issues will add bike lanes and pedestrian-friendly features to the section of Walnut between 1st and 3rd.

Imagine Bloomington visioning meetings are continuing. Please try to attend one as your schedule allows.

Committee reports

STAR committee report

Cynthia noted that the committee is working on evaluating waste data, including IU, MCSWMD and City data.

Meredith is tracking down IU's 2011 data.

Environmental Commission Planning Committee

We'll wait for this report until next month.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 7:25.